

Opportunity

It Came Suddenly,
but Produced Last-
ing Results :- :-

By BENJAMIN L. HYDE

I was a discontented farmer's boy, with nothing ahead of me but a life of drudgery. Of late years farming has become a science. Then it was dependent on the elements. No one knew when the fruit of his labor would be swept away from him by a drought or a storm of frost.

One memorable day I cut my finger and concluded to go over to Farmer Gadsden's to get some court plaster. I didn't need it. I simply made an excuse to see Julia Gadsden, for whom I had a soft spot in my heart. She put the court plaster on the cut for me, cuddling me at the same time. I spent an hour with her instead of at my work, as I should have done. On my way back, hearing the railroad which passed between the Gadsdens



and our farm, I heard a train coming. I was surprised to hear it slow down, because trains always passed us without stopping. Then I heard a shot, another and another.

The ground rose between me and the railroad, and the interval was covered by trees. Just beyond the trees the road passed through a cut. I ran forward to see what was the matter and, coming to the edge of the wood, saw that the train had been stopped by robbers. All was excitement, both on the train and among those who were doing the robbing. I supposed that men were going through the cars holding up the passengers, but they were not. They had another object, which soon appeared.

Standing above and beside the cut, I could look right down on the engine, the baggage and express car. A masked man was in the tender, bending over the side to take in what was going on in the rear. Evidently being satisfied that there was a hitch in the proceedings, he called to one of the robbers to know what was the matter and received a reply that the express messenger had succeeded in locking the doors of the express car. Whereupon the man in the cab got down and hurried to the rear.

The opportunity of a lifetime presented itself to me. Not that I recognized it as such; it only occurred to me that seeing and not being seen, a locomotive before me and no one to oppose it, there might be a remote possibility of my running away with it and giving an alarm. There was no one at the forward end of the express car, and if I could uncouple the locomotive I might get into the cab and put on steam.

As to uncoupling in that day the old fashioned link and pin were used, and if the car and engine were in position to leave the pin loose I would have no trouble in drawing it. I knew nothing about a locomotive except that I had seen engineers start their machines by throwing back a lever and pulling on a handle, the throttle. All this flashed through my mind within a few seconds, and another contingency loomed up. If I should fail, if the robbers should catch me before I got sufficient headway to leave them behind, I would be murdered. The thought staggered me, but I was so incited by my scheme the chances seemed so many in my favor, that I was unable to resist the temptation. It was doing the thing rather than the thought of any good that might come from it that spurred me on.

He who achieves success, though he looks ahead instead of behind, rarely has that foresight with which remarkable men have been credited. He makes his start and pushes on in the dark. I made my start, but my calculations were immediately upset. I had scarcely left the wood before I saw the robbers—there were several of them—leave the rear end of the express car and rush in a body to the forward end, the end which I was to have uncoupled. I darted back into hiding. One robber mounted the platform and tried the door. It was lock-

ed. Another ran forward and seized a tie which had been wedged in between the rails a short distance from where the locomotive stood and carried it to the express car.

I had not noticed this tie and my heart stopped beating as I realized that it would have spoiled my plan and resulted in my death. The robbers took the tie up onto the front platform of the express car and began an attempt to use it to break in the door. But the tie was six feet long or thereabouts, while the distance between the tender and the car was not so much. The consequence was that the robbers had not sufficient space in which to work with it. Nevertheless they persevered. Another plan, far more desperate than the first, must needs pop into my head. If I could run down to it, uncouple the car, then dash forward into the cab I could move on, carrying with me the express car. But I must take the robbers with me. They would climb up over the tender and shoot me down.

Yet there would be chances for me. First, on finding the train moving they might be disconcerted and get off. But even if they did I could hardly hope to acquire speed in time to leave them behind. Again, having put on steam I could fight. I had no arms, but I could use lumps of coal. All this was folly, but I had been seized by a mania for carrying out my scheme, and a hundred devils could not have stopped me. Besides I was pushing forward. Happenings in my favor might arise.

Anyway, I resolved to go to the rear of the express car. What I would do when I got there I didn't know. I found the conductor and several men passengers who, freed from the presence of the robbers, had got together what arms were on the train and were debating a possible use for them. But it was evident they had not got their courage up to a point where they could use them, and they had no plan or leader. Without stopping to inquire as to their armament, I said:

"Here, you men! I'm going forward to get on the locomotive, which is deserted. One of you go up there where you can see me, and when I give a signal uncouple right here. Then all who have firearms go forward, and when I put on steam send all the bullets you can in among the robbers on the front platform."

"Good!" cried the conductor, who would have done something before this if he had had a plan.

I scurried forward, keeping close under the car, passing the front platform in the same way, and in a quarter of a minute was in the cab. A man stood where he could see me. I nodded to him and waited. It seemed to me an eternity before the car was uncoupled. I knew when it had been by seeing my supports advance on both sides of the train. They had been added to by the messenger, with whom they had succeeded in communicating, and had got more arms from the express car. I gave a jerk on the whistle, threw back the lever and let on steam.

The moment my supports heard the whistle they opened fire, the locomotive and express car moving at the same time. The robbers were taken by surprise. One man fell dead, two were shot while jumping off the platform, while a fourth got away. I did not know of this at the time. I only knew that no one interfered with me. I had the express treasure behind me and did not stop till I had reached the next station. There armed men got aboard the locomotive, it was switched away from the express car and rushed back. But the fracas had all been over before I had made a hundred yards.

So it was that the maddest scheme that ever entered the brain of a farmer's boy was made practicable by circumstances. Indeed, when the robbers left the rear door of the express car to concentrate their efforts on the forward platform—possibly because there they could be near the engine—victory was in the hands of the frightened group who afterward supported me. But they had no one with sufficient pluck or plan to fuse them and put them in action.

My exploit was not long in reaching the general manager of the road, and I received an invitation from the president to visit him there. I found myself on my arrival an object of curiosity, the employees craning their necks to get a look at me. When I reached the president's office he grasped my hand and asked me to be seated. When we were alone he said:

"What can I do for you?"

"I don't know."

"Leave it to me. We have need of such men as you on this road and we want you. If you like, I will educate you to fill any position we have."

"That's exactly what I would ask," I replied.

"But to do that you must begin at the bottom and work up. You will commence as a brakeman on a gravel train, to be promoted as you learn the duties of each successive position."

I was delighted with this plan and acceded to it at once. When I left the president he handed me a check. I didn't look at the amount, telling him to invest it for me, which he promised to do, and I left him, having agreed to report the next week for work.

As soon as I returned to the farm I went to see Julia Gadsden, who had bound up the cut on my finger. I told her that since she had kept me during the exact time required for me to meet the held up train, she was entitled to a part of my reward. We settled it by enjoying it together.

That was long ago. I occupied every position on the railroad, from the lowest to the highest, then became a retired capitalist. I am now rich and attribute my success to opportunity and an ability to take advantage of that opportunity.

MILLINERY FADS.

Demi-Season Hat
of Rich Rag Lace.



Courtesy of Ora Cne.

SMART MODEL FOR BETWEEN SEASONS.

The hat seen in the illustration is a millinery creation designed for demi-season wear.

The chic little creation is made over a frame of thin flexible gold wire such as one often sees employed for an entirely different purpose—rat traps.

The connection between millinery's dainty headgear and the beheading of M. Mouse is not an altogether happy one, but the effect of the chapeau part of the transaction is most pleasing.

Rag lace, an original fabric in cream color, covers the wire frame. The connection is completed by a threading of black velvet ribbon through the lace and a plaited fan shaped ornament of white malines.

Woman in Epigram.

The whisper of a beautiful woman can be heard farther than the loudest call of duty.—Anonymous.

The man who enters his wife's dressing room is either a philosopher or a fool.—Honore de Balzac.

Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned.

Nor hell a fury like a woman scorned.—William Congreve.

Woman is a creature between man and the angels.—Honore de Balzac.

Woman—the gods be thanked—is not even collaterally related to that sentimental abstraction called an angel.—Junius Henri Browne.

God bless all good women! To their soft hands and pitying hearts we must all come at last.—Oliver Wendell Holmes.

There are no ugly women. There are only women who do not know how to look pretty.—Antoine Pierre Barre.

As for the woman, though we can and must love her, we cannot live without her.—John Dryden.

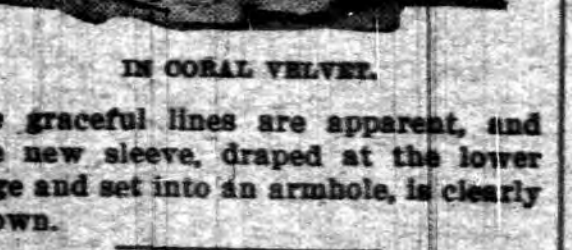
A woman's friendship is, as a rule, the legacy of love or the alms of indifference.—Anonymous.

There is no compensation for the woman who feels that the chief relation of her life has been a mistake. She has lost her crown.—George Elliot.

The secret of youthful looks in an aged face is easy shoes, easy corsets and an easy conscience.—Anonymous.

Wrap With Set-in Sleeves.

This gorgeous flame pink or coral colored velvet wrap does not betray its splendid hue in the photograph, but



IN CORAL VELVET.

The graceful lines are apparent, and the new sleeve, draped at the lower edge and set into an armhole, is clearly shown.

A Wise Girl.

The baseball player gazed softly at her.

"Would you sign with me for the game of life?" he whispered tenderly.

BULL RING ANTICS

Mexican "Sport" as Viewed
Through American Spectacles.

TACTICS OF THE TOREROS.

They Were Better Runners Than Fighters and Displayed More Cowardice Than Bravery—Mirth That the Natives Couldn't Appreciate.

"Thank you, Aguirre, but I hardly think I want to see one of your bull-fights. I have heard enough about them to make me sick of the thought." I had seen every other kind of fight, from messenger boys up to bull moose and buffalo, and Aguirre felt that I would forever regret it if I left Mexico without at least once witnessing the national sport.

I reluctantly consented to accompany him, and after our dinner, instead of taking the usual siesta, we went to the ring. I had often read the stories of such fights, and after the series of three had been finished I wondered if any writer had ever taken the trouble to describe the ridiculous and funny stunts that crop out during the course of the fights.

The first bull that was released went through the ordinary course of sprouts, first going a broken down race horse which had seen service on many of the tracks in the States and was used in the bull ring only because he was a thoroughbred. Finally the bull was put to death by a stab between the shoulders, which paralyzed his spine.

The second entrant was a little black fellow full of fire, which had been especially raised on the big ranch of Governor Tirazcos. Between the torii (open) and the ring there was a short alley, just wide enough to allow the bulls to get through without rubbing the hair from their flanks. Leaning over the boards which formed the sides of the passageway was a Mexican negro, who, when the little bull was shoved out of the torii, jabbed a fishhook "barbo" into his left shoulder, which maddened the animal to such an extent that he hardly knew which way to turn, so eager was he to locate his enemy.

The crowd at this time was going mad and from all sides could be heard frantic cries of "Cobardo, podrido, putrefaccion" (coward, rotten, rotteness), and "El toro es muerto" (the bull is dead). On the contrary, he was very much alive and showed it a few moments later. After he was chased into the torii the torero, whose name was Alberts, appeared before the president's box, as is the custom when a failure is made, to explain himself and ask for another chance before he was condemned. The opportunity was given, and the result was only a repetition of the former attempt, except that the bull was presented from catching him by helpers who were armed with long pikes and prevented the beast from scaling the fence.

Springing ten or a dozen yards toward the center of the ring, the frenzied creature stopped short, spread his front feet out as far as he could and madly pawed the ground. In his shoulder the wicked barb still stuck, and to it were fastened a big yellow rosette and a half dozen red streamers trailing the ground.

Presently a volunteer novice torero (bullfighter on foot) jumped over the fence on the north side of the ring and advanced a few feet toward the defiant bull. One flaut of the torero's red bandana (banner) and the bull became a demon. With head down he rushed at the novice, who meanwhile had lost his nerve, for he stood quaking with fear when he should have been advancing to meet the onrushing animal. When the latter was only twenty yards away the volunteer dropped the bandana and espada (sword) and put for the fence as fast as he could go. The fence was about four feet high, and the torero cleared it in a straight-way dive.

The poor bull was not so fortunate, although he was game enough to attempt the fence in his mad effort to catch his tormentor. He landed on top of the boards and stuck there, with his hind legs in the air, until he was released by some attendants who ventured from the other side of the ring.

I took a heap of fun out of the antics of my little hero, the bull, and was having a good laugh all to myself while the mob was going wild with disgust at the cowardice of Alberts when Aguirre advised me to suppress my mirth or there would be trouble for both of us.

When order was restored the little black bunch of muscle, brawn and grit was brought into the inclosure for the third time, but it took the efforts of two toreros (bullfighters on horseback) and a professional foot fighter to beat him, and his defeat was then due only to the fact that he was exhausted. Aguirre told me that it was bad form in Mexico to laugh at anything in a bullfight but the death of the bull, but I remarked to him that in all America he would not find a gringo who would not instantly grasp the funny side of that particular bullfight and carry it home so that others might laugh too.—Denver Republican.

The Reluctant Request.

Edgar—Ethel, I've left my umbrella downtown. Ethel—Well? Edgar—I'm afraid you'll have to lend me the gold handled umbrella you gave me on my birthday.—Detroit Free Press.

Commonly we say a judgment falls upon a man for something in him we cannot abide.—Selden.

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